

Thomas Alleyne's High School, Uttoxeter

Minutes of a meeting of the Learning and Standards committee held in the school on Tuesday, 15 May 2018 at 5.00pm.

Present:

Dr M Jary (chair), Mr M Cruddas, Mrs B Davies, Ms R Horry, Mr I Johnstone, Mr M Prescott, Mrs A Trenergy.

Mrs J Rudge (Headteacher)

Also in Attendance:

Mr T Brunt (Deputy Headteacher)
Mrs C Catterall (Senior Assistant Headteacher)
Mrs C Dodd (Senior Assistant Headteacher)
Mr D Godwin (Assistant Headteacher)
Mrs R Lindsay (Assistant Headteacher)
Mr R Sheldon (Clerk to the Governing Body)

Apology for Absence:

An apology was received from Mrs K Fisher.

42. Declarations of Interest:

There were no declarations of interest.

43. Minutes:

The minutes of the meeting of the Learning and Standards committee held on 6 February 2018 had been previously made available to governors via Office 365.

It was resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting be received and approved as presented.

44. Matter Arising:

Policies for Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance (Minute 32 refers)

The headteacher confirmed that the "Thomas Alleyne's High School CEIAG Provider Access Policy 2018" had been amended as agreed at the last meeting.

45. Systems to Secure Accurate Assessment:

Governors were reminded of discussions at recent meetings regarding systems being put in place to secure accurate assessment of students' grades and it was agreed that for this meeting there would be a focus on two of the departments where results had been furthest away from the predicted grades.

Mr Cartwright, Head of Computing and ICT, was present for this item to give a report on the work being undertaken by the Computing and ICT Department to better ensure reliable assessment of students' work. He was pleased to confirm that an external assessment standardisation for ICT had recently been completed and that all grades that had been given to students were correct and in line with the moderator. There was a new

specification for computer science and an outline was given of the work being undertaken to prepare for this, including working with neighbouring schools. Mr Cartwright also informed governors of strategies that had been put into place to support other curriculum departments.

Mr Brunt, deputy headteacher, provided an update on work undertaken by the Drama department to bring about improvement in securing accurate assessment for both GCSE courses and A level. He confirmed that meetings were being held to share expertise and examples also provided of visual displays used in the classroom to support students.

Full discussion followed and governors welcomed the systems that had been put in place to secure accurate assessment in Computing and ICT and Drama. Governors looked forward to discussing this further at their next meeting when student results would be known and the positive impact of the strategies would hopefully become clear.

It was resolved –

That Mr Brunt and Mr Cartwright be thanked for their reports and governors place on record their thanks to staff from both departments for all of the work undertaken to better secure accurate assessment.

46. Disadvantaged Students Update and Interventions:

A report on disadvantaged, SEN and EHCP students had been previously made available to governors and Mr Godwin went through the detail of it. He outlined the many intervention strategies in place to support individual students and provided details of the impact of those strategies. Despite the level of support given to students he was disappointed to confirm that the gap between outcomes of disadvantaged students compared to other students wasn't decreasing.

The headteacher further reported that the level of SEN funding remained a big concern for all schools and that, as a result, a letter of concern on behalf of all Staffordshire schools was to be sent to the Department for Education.

It was resolved –

- i) That Mr Godwin be thanked for presenting his report on disadvantaged, SEN and EHCP students and that it be received.
- ii) That governors seek support from the Uttoxeter Learning Trust in helping to reduce the gap between disadvantaged and other students.

47. Pastoral Update:

Mrs Catterall circulated her pastoral report and took governors through the detail of it. She reported in particular her disappointment in the increasing number of persistent student absences but confirmed that the school continued to identify strategies to reduce absence levels and was pleased to report that the Uttoxeter Learning Trust had recently secured education welfare support to work across all schools.

With regard to student behaviour, governors noted that the level of fixed term exclusions was below the national average although the level of permanent exclusions was slightly above. Attendance at Dove House remained a key strategy to improve behaviour although

governors were informed that such a sanction was not effective for a small number of students. As such, other sanctions were put in place, as appropriate, for the more challenging students. Governors also noted that the main reason for the large increase in the number of female students attending Dove House was mainly for the inappropriate use of social media.

The headteacher further reported how some schools would 'off-roll' students to reduce the level of recorded student exclusions and outlined Ofsted views regarding this practice. The headteacher confirmed that the practice of 'off-rolling' students did not happen at this school and provided an update on the work being undertaken to try and prevent the permanent exclusion of a student. The headteacher also informed governors that searches of students were undertaken on a regular basis, sometimes resulting in the confiscation of inappropriate items. Governors noted that in most cases the confiscation of any banned substance would result in it not being returned to the student but that such action did not always have the support of the parents.

It was resolved –

- i) That the report be received and governors welcome the work being undertaken by the school to reduce the level of permanent exclusions.
- ii) That governors fully support arrangements to search students as necessary and for the non-return of banned substances as considered appropriate.

48. Policy Update - Assessment Policy:

An updated copy of the Assessment policy had been previously made available in Office 365 and Mr Brunt reported that it had been revised to reflect new guidance, with changes in particular relating to the elimination of unnecessary workload around marking. An outline was given of the strategies implemented to eliminate the unnecessary workload, which were now included in the revised policy.

It was resolved –

That the revised Assessment policy be received and approved.

49. Teaching and Learning Communities 2017/2018:

A summary of the actions and impact of the Teaching and Learning Communities 2017/2018 was circulated and Mrs Lindsay went through the detail of it. Discussion followed and governors particularly noted the Post-16 projects aimed at improving teaching and learning for the new A level topics.

It was resolved –

That the summary of the actions and impact of the Teaching and Learning Communities 2017/2018 be received and noted with interest.

50. Spring Term Learning Walks:

A report on learning walks undertaken by the leadership team during the spring term 2018 had been made available in Office 365 and Mr Brunt went through the detail of it. He reported that the majority of the learning walks had been in Y11 and Post-16 and gave a

summary of the outcomes of the learning walks. He was again pleased to confirm the school judgement that the quality of teaching is good/outstanding. He also reported how the learning walks helped to identify areas on which to focus to bring about further improvement, including in particular MFL and Computing and ICT. He confirmed that strategies were in place to bring about required improvement and that the focus of the summer term learning walks would be those departments.

It was resolved –

That Mr Brunt be thanked for presenting information in relation to the learning walks and governors pleased to note the overall judgement on the quality of teaching.

51. Performance Management / Spring Term Lesson Observations:

A report to show the outcomes following lesson observations conducted during the spring term 2018 had been made available in Office 365. Mr Brunt reported that the lesson observations were a more formal process to reflect what was happening in the classrooms and was pleased to report that overall 96% of lessons were judged to be good or outstanding. Mr Brunt further reported that for any lesson identified as requiring improvement strategies were put in place to provide the necessary support for the member of staff.

It was resolved –

That Mr Brunt be thanked for presenting information in relation to lesson observations and governors pleased to note the overall judgement.

52. Work Scrutiny Outcomes:

Reports of a Y11 work scrutiny in March 2018 and a Post-16 work scrutiny in April 2018, undertaken by the leadership team, had been made available in Office 365. Mr Brunt went through the detail of both reports and reported that strategies had been put in place to address identified areas for improvement. For the Y11 work scrutiny this included in particular the need to make clear the next steps for students following the assessment and feedback of their work. The Post-16 work scrutiny had shown that the organisation of student notes had been better when use was being made of exercise books. This finding had been shared with curriculum leaders although it had been agreed that staff should continue to be given flexibility around student use of exercise books.

It was resolved –

That the reports on work scrutiny outcomes be received and noted.

53. MFL and Computing/ICT Update:

See Confidential Appendix (attached)

54. Strategic School Improvement Fund (SSIF) Bid:

The headteacher was pleased to confirm that the SSIF bid had now been submitted and reminded governors that its particular focus was to improve access and outcomes in MFL, with a specific focus on disadvantaged students. The headteacher further reported that

whilst preparation of the bid had taken a significant amount of time, if successful it would help give a greater incentive for students to study MFL.

It was resolved –

That governors thank the headteacher and all others who had helped in putting the bid together and look forward to a positive outcome.

55. Teaching School Update:

The headteacher was delighted to report that the school had recently been informed of its successful application to be awarded Teaching School status. An official announcement was to be made at a conference to be held on 18 May at which Mrs Lindsay would be present as school representative. The headteacher thanked all concerned, in particular Mr Osborne-Town, for their help in preparing the bid.

It was resolved –

That governors welcome the award of Teaching School status and also place on record their thanks to all concerned in preparing what had proved to be a successful bid.

56. Any Other Business:

a) Mr Tim Brunt – Deputy Headteacher

Governors noted that this was Mr Brunt's last meeting of the Learning and Standards committee and thanked him for all the help and support he had given to this committee in particular during his time as deputy headteacher.

b) Committee Review

Brief discussion took place regarding committee membership and the headteacher confirmed that a review would be undertaken at the next full meeting of the governing body.

57. Consideration Given to KPIs:

KPI 4 – Governors provide challenge and hold the headteacher and other senior leaders to account for the improving quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and their behaviour and safety

Covered through discussions relating to Minutes 45 (systems to secure assessment), 46 (pastoral update and student exclusions), 50 (learning walks) and 52 (work scrutiny).

KPI 5 – Governors use performance management systems, including the performance management of the headteacher to improve teaching, leadership and management.

Covered through discussions relating Minutes 51 (performance management: spring term lesson observations) and 53 (MFL and Computing/ICT update)

58. Date of Next Meeting:

Governors were informed that the next meeting of the Learning and Standards committee would be held in the school on Tuesday, 18 September 2018 at 5.00pm.

The meeting finished at 7.15pm.

Signed.....

Date.....